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THE DESERTER.



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THE DESERTER,

A Tale:

WITH

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



BY

ALFRED BUNN.



LONDON:

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M.DCCC.XVII.



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Dedication.

TO ALMIRA.

I.

FOR many moments of that sweet delight

Which all must know who ever dwelt with thee ;

For many pure regrets no time can blight,

And some calm tears I thought were shed for me,

I send this nursling of my minstrelsy.

My heart's bright Spirit! —but it cannot tell

Hope's deepest impulse, Feeling's full degree ;

Throbs which have slept so long, they now may swell

In passions warm and wild, it were in vain to quell !

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II.

What is this come upon me? — 'tis a flame
That inly burns, yet feels not to consume;
That strives, that thrills within me, all the same
If gladness give my cheek her rip'ning bloom,
Or sorrow the intensity of gloom!
It is a meteor, passing o'er my sight,
To blazon, glimmer, slumber, then relume;
Something in lustre like the sainted light
Shed from above on man, save that it knows not night!

III.

I should mistrust the sacred ray of Heaven,
But that I see it sparkling in thine eyes;
An orb of beauty to the blind world giv'n,
Which, to its latest setting, dearly dies
In tearless lustre, on men's destinies!
Mine has been dark indeed; and as the while
The day-god glitter'd from his throne of skies,
To dazzle others into strife or guile;
He never beam'd on me, till from thy lucid smile!

IV.

If from this cell of thinking I have sought
To drive all visions, idly basking there ;
If to forgetfulness I give each thought,
Save *one*, I fain would hope with thee to share,
One, tho' it soothe or torture, I must bear ;
One, all so pure, e'en reason must approve,
Nor dare to banish from its secret lair ;
If Duty, Fame, nor Time can e'er remove
This first and fond impression — is it not of love?

V.

Calm, calm awhile. I must not tell thee now,
What most is circling round my beating heart ;
For after days may teach me to avow
More than I yet can venture to impart.
If o'er this page thy kindred tear should start,
Wrung from the bed of Feeling's transient pain ;
Know, Lady, it will serve to balm the smart,
Passion has planted with a deathless stain ;
A spot on Memory's tablet fated to remain !

VI.

It is a wreath of song, at times I've twin'd
With leaves and flow'rets of a tender hue ;
Young emblems fancy, in her sportive mind,
Has rear'd and cull'd, when, sparkling to the view,
A world of fairy-life before her grew !
I offer thee the garland, and, withal,
What drops of tribute the kind world bedew ;
Nay, the bright smiles from partial eyes that fall,
Shall be resigned to her, the Spirit of them all !

ADVERTISEMENT.

A RECENT occurrence, the subject of public controversy, may be supposed to have given rise to the reflections embodied in the following tale.

The incidents in themselves are speculative: whether the illustrations are correct, is submitted to the discrimination of the Reader: whether the conclusions are just, Futurity alone can determine.

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THE DESERTER.

“ Rosa non colta in sua stagion, si ch’ ella
“ Impallidisca in sulla siepe ombrosa!”

Orlando Furioso.
Canto xxvi.

THE DESERTER.

A TALE.

I.

SINCE happy childhood on me dawn'd,

Ere care disturb'd its tranquil lot,

Ere sadness moved, or fear forewarn'd:—

— Dark presages I soon forgot!

I was my parents' constant care,

5

The burthen of their peaceful prayer;

A Mother's hope and sole employ,

My Father's "pretty blue-ey'd boy:"

I recollect they liv'd in love,

And vows in sweetness spoken;

10

Whose fondness time could not remove,
Of which I was the token!

My tongue would falter to express

How brightly smil'd their eyes on me ;

The flow'ret of their happiness 15

First bloom'd in my fair infancy.

'Twere vain the tumults to assuage

— Which swell'd, and swells with memory's age —

Of thoughts, that feeling cannot quell,

And yet expression cannot tell ; 20

Which now, calm, silent, unconfin'd,

Then rush in conflict o'er the mind :

They come and go, like mists that fly

Along a summer twilight sky ;

Or trembling gales that idly sigh 25

At times, through Heaven's fair canopy : —

Yet, could I one brief moment steal,

One hour from time's decay ;

I might some faithful thoughts reveal,

Time has not wash'd away ! 30

I could recall some looks of light,

That woo'd me once with their delight,

While instinct whispers in mine ear,

I was than life to them more dear ;

And I can trace 35

On memory's space,

Some sacred spots, tho' lapp'd in night,

Forgetfulness can *not* efface !

II.

My life, when boyhood's sun had past,

In fortune's varying mould was cast ; 40

She lent to me that faithless smile

To others well extended ;

And what could welcome or beguile,

Within my fate was blended :

She link'd me in the sacred chain

5

That bound my country's pride ;

It fetter'd — 'twas a pleasing pain

I could not hate nor chide :

It fetter'd ! — Ah, the softest hue

Enchantment's self can give the view ;

50

The sun-beam in the silent skies,

Or eve, when distant day-light dies,

And every thought they bid arise ;

Yon woodland vales of fairy scene,

Its beds and bowers of evergreen,

Its weeping streams, and swelling breeze

That wantons o'er the waving trees,

And Nature's garb, howe'er profuse
In beauty, fade away by use !
I know not e'en if smiles of pride 60
On woman's sainted cheek that glide,
That light man's life, and are his guide
In fortune's stormiest day ;
I know not, if, by gazing still,
With passion's wild, transported will, 65
They do not seem to die away !
What wonder, then, that o'er me came
Dark discontentment's with'ring flame ?
A feeble spark, first caught from sadness,
Lighted to crime — bursting to madness — 70
Hung, like a vapour-cloud, upon the mind,
To shade the soul — the senses blind —
And, o'er the eye of feeling, fall
A cold, pale, melancholy pall !

III.

- “ Farewell, my child,” my parent wept, 75
 While to its bed the warm drop crept,
 To teach me, as it gently fell,
 How dear to sorrow that “ farewell !”
 “ We part, my boy, but with thee go
 The soft *regrets* of many years :” 80
 (Young flow’rets of the fairest glow,
 Pale emblems of the tenderest woe,
 Which bloom and fade, but only show
 Remembrance in her tears !)
 “ I stretch my arms thy limbs to grasp, 85
 And almost think the form I clasp,
 (— For use, tho’ Nature’s second will,
 Is first in Nature’s feelings still —)

The same in love, in light, in grace,
As that in youth I did embrace ; 90
And, o'er my breast, now seem to trace
That sacred, warm, devoted place,
 Where oft thy head hath lain ;
While, on my heart, and in thine eye,
I watch'd the fairy spirit fly, 95
 Which check'd our mutual pain.
Go — and if Hope can bear thy name
Through the rough, danger'd path of Fame,
And make thee all its visions frame ;
Thy worth shall be to worlds afar, 100
The soldier's beaming battle-star,
His watch-word, through the fields of war !
I bend to Heav'n a pious knee,
Which oft hath nurst and fondled thee ;

To waft up to its realms of air, 105

My sighs of sadness, breath'd in prayer.

But I must chide this wasting grief,

That falls in fulness, not relief ;

Go — go — and if thy bosom beat

With all I say or ask ; 110

Let duty in thy mind repeat

Thy first and noblest task !

I next would bid thee think on me,

Thy Mother, first in misery ;

Oh, let the words my heart that swell, 115

Devote thee to their silent spell :

— Be happy, Adrian — farewell !” —

IV.

I told thee, stranger, how I flew

From all I valued, lov'd, and knew ;

A Father's smiles, a Mother's arms, 120
And young Matilda's speaking charms,
For honor, in the world's alarms!
I told thee, how I woo'd the laws
Of freedom, in my Country's cause.—

When first I join'd the warrior-clang, 125
A happy, thoughtless youth ;
In fancy of those scenes I sang,
I sigh'd to see in truth !
'Tis thus, the young creative brain
From fantasy is led to pain ; 130
Lur'd on by phantoms of success,
To sights of deepest bitterness ;
And danger is its dearest choice,
Tho' child of caution's chiding voice !

Thus, only three fair moons had shed 135
Their looks of lustre on my head,
When instant peril threaten'd near!
Through storms of horror, ways of fear,
Though to oppose us, thousand foes
In wild confusion round us rose ; 140
We pass'd, a warlike, trusty band,
With resolution's heart and hand.
My deadliest foe I met in fight,
He fell before me ; in my sight
A bird of prey did on him light, 145
To rend each vein, and with red beak
His heart, with life still quivering, break.
I pass'd him — as I would the worm
That drags on earth its clammy form ;

I pass'd him, through the strife to ride, 150
With friends and fortune by my side,
But stopt : she chang'd : some dear ones died,
And left me dumb : I saw the blood
 In life-drops from their bosoms gushing ;
It flew to mine — I rallied — stood — 155
 While shame was on my chill cheek blushing,
 Young valour through my pulses rushing,
 And wild revenge my feeling flushing !
No blow could stop, no harm dismay,
For fear had lost her feeble sway ; 160
Fate chang'd again — and at her look
 False desperation fled ;
She taught me every frown to brook
 Adversity could shed !

And, from Adversity's rude night,
Imagination wings her flight, 180
With finer, bolder, wilder light.
The bird, from its captivity,
Sings sweeter, than on wing of glee
It chirp'd, its mountain liberty !
The prisoner, from his stony cell, 185
Paints Freedom's high-inspiring spell,
In hues more gayly, dearly shaded,
Than when its star-beam had not faded ;
'Tis hopelessness within the heart,
Or soft endearments that impart 190
A wound to memory, never dying,
Regrets in wakefulness still lying ;
Soft, as the rosy tints that rest
Upon a lake's unruffled breast .

As the sun's last receding ray 195
 Along its waters dies away!
 'Tis restlessness within the mind,
 Which discontentment serves to blind,
 Or rooted sorrow, inly bleeding,
 Whose flame despair is rudely feeding! 200

VI.

I laid aside my helmet crested,
 I sheath'd my steel, my war-horse rested ;
 The scenes in which my feelings prided
 Have vanish'd — and my hopes subsided !

In solitude, reflection keeps 205

Her vigils, long and dear ; (b)
 And memory, in silence, weeps
 A still-renewing tear !

Conjecture passes o'er the brain,
Like vivid lightnings through the sky; 210
Thought comes, and ebbs, then flows again,
As vapours o'er the waves that fly,
Or autumn breezes, as they cry
Along the leafy-cover'd plain!
Dissatisfaction follows thought, 215
When wisdom's impulses decay,
Then feeling flies from reason's sway,
In visions from temptation caught,
With hope and fear intensely wrought!
It goads our actions into crime, 220
To trample on the laws of time;
'To quit the path where honor leads,
And sully fame's fair, early deeds.

Man's heart is like the tender rose,

In frailty begotten ; 225

The weeping gale upon it blows —

—It dies, and is forgotten !

Or, should it from the dew-drop borrow

A balm, 't will wither by the morrow ;

Or bloom its short precarious hour, 230

An ever-changing, faithless flower !

* * * * *

I cannot from my brain unfold

The dreams that hover'd there ;

Idea madden'd — yet, so cold,

To triumph o'er despair : 235

False feeling, goaded into life,

Seduc'd by pride, beguil'd in strife :

Dark dreams by darker truth requited,
Sensation in delirium blighted,
Passions in their own force delighted, 240
Divided most, yet most united :
A void of wildest spaciousness,
A hope of light, tho' little less
Than the last lustres that decay
In twilight, dying far away ! 245
All this, and more, I fain would speak,
 Of every throb I feel ;
Of deepest impulse, strong or weak ;
Of thoughts, contending but to break
In tumult : yet they vainly seek 250
 Upon my lip to steal ;
They inly strive, but are congeal'd,
And fix ; they cannot be reveal'd ;

For to their blacken'd cave they shrink,
While wand'ring on expression's brink ! 255
But hast thou mark'd at noon-day tide,
The sun in heaven straying ;
And through its bright blue ocean glide,
When not a cloud is playing ;
—It is a sight of fair surprise, 260
And meet alone for angel's eyes ;
Tho' like, withal, the tearful ray
That lightens man's uncertain day. —
Fleeting, like Time, with winged power
Across young Pleasure's full-blown bower : 265
And hast thou, when beguil'd an hour,
To watch the sun-beam, cull the flower,
Or court the cool bank of the brook ;
Seen all this sacred beauty shook,

Yon orb and sky, along thy path, 270
One moment change from smiles to wrath,
And die before the tempest's lower ?
It comes, it gathers, cloud on cloud,
In blackness, like a demon-shroud ;
While battling thunders swell the storm, 275
To burst on Heaven's trembling form !
More dreary frowns the wide expanse,
And lightnings thro' its desert dance ;
The torrents stream, the whirlwinds throw
Their fury o'er creation's brow ; 280
With warring winds, and sheeted rain,
Are mingled, part, then join again,
Nor seem to know a resting spot :
— Such, stranger, was my lot !

VII.

I know not what within me grew, 285
It was some power none ever knew ;
It lur'd me on from doubt to deed,
Then left me —like a weaken'd weed,
Torn by the blast from off its stem,
And strew'd on earth, a nameless gem ! 290
I fled the friends I cherish'd most,
 They seem'd (—yet why?) no longer dear :
I quitted them : — a rebel host,
 A band of boldness, linger'd near !
I join'd these men who deal in strife ; 295
 They woo'd me to become their chief ;
I gave them up a traitor's life,
 And found their friendship and belief !

What follow'd, fills an useless name,
But from oblivion it may claim 300
An heritage, in all the same !
In head and heart I soon became
That reckless and unfeeling thing,
Whose frown was death, and smile a sting !
A few brief months had o'er me past — 305
They chang'd me : on the rude world cast,
I stood a living mark of hate,
In happiness most desolate !
My early friends were sadly chang'd,
Their hearts, like mine, as much estrang'd : 310
From fortune's very loftiest lot
My high-born virtue fell ;
The name and lineage were forgot,
Once Honor's brightest spell ;

And thus it is with those who fly 315
To feeling's dire extremity !

VIII.

If thou hast felt the fiery throng
Of passions, *powerless* yet *strong*,
Rise o'er thee, like a low'ring play
Of clouds, upon a stormy day ; 320
That rage awhile, and then convulse
The darting brain, and beating pulse ;
Nor rest in their ungovern'd gloom,
'Till they within themselves consume ;
Yet while the cope is blackest o'er thee, 325
In dazzling agony before thee,
Hope still is lending to thine eye
A distant gloom of vacancy !

If thou hast felt the cold embrace

Of deadliest despair, 330

That hugs thee in its chilly space,

Only to welter, on thy face,

In stiller, blacker glare :

Then will reality reveal

The wasting dreariness I feel ; 335

From fall to fall I am so low,

That life no duller ebb can know ;

And better that its waves should ride,

To whelm me in their swelling tide.

My arm of valour, nerve of strength, 340

My blood hath almost fled at length ;

And what within me seems to strive,

Is fluttering Nature just alive !

The Tiger, in his gory lair,
When eager hunters rouse him there, 345
With me in torture may compare,
And I his tearless fate may share.
I know not, if the winds on high
Do not, to breathe my follies, sigh ;
Or vapoury clouds, with swollen eye, 350
Shed tears upon my destiny !

Beset with numbers, gathering round
To crush me in their might ;
Destruction, with the firmest bound,
Is bursting on my sight ; 355
And every wind, with hissing sound,
A death-gale in its flight !

It is a pang that never ends,
The keenest torture life attends,
When frown of foes, or smile of friends, 360
An equal indistinctness lends.

And such the anguish throbbing now
Across my heated heart and brow ;
I am the vilest, saddest thing,
'That o'er the damp earth flaps its wing ! 365

When toss'd on water-mountains, coiling high
To dew the clouds that flit along the sky,
Some labouring vessel, fetter'd by the shock
Bearing the wave upon the pointed rock,
Strives through the opening vale still to explore 370
Its path of danger, till the flashing roar
Heaves it in fragments on the beaten shore :

Then, in that moment, should thine eye behold
Some bleeding bosom, flying from life's hold,
Some closing eye, that calmly moves its gaze, 375
To look for pity from some Angel's face ;
Say, couldst thou watch it linger on in woe,
And not the hand, by feeling giv'n, bestow ?
Say, couldst thou view the eye its life-drops weep,
And gaze, then give the body to the deep — 380
Watch the last struggle o'er the waters roll,
And see it sink to death's unknown control ?

IX.

What armed men are gathering there ?
What shouts are lingering on the air ?
There sparkles blood within their smile ; 385
'Tis treachery, without its wile.

I stand the mark at which they aim ;
 'Tis well, revenge must waste its flame ;
 'Tis come, and I must learn to bear
 Those pangs which I have fear'd to share ; 390
 More near, and now they rush upon me,
 And stand ; but still they have not won me !

* * * * *

We cannot give the life we take,
 Nor reunite the heart we break ;
 And, ah ! nor days, nor years, nor time, 395
 Can pardon suicide's dark crime !
 They gather round, and now behold
 Remains of madness, deep and bold,
 Whose fulness grief can but unfold !
 They gaze — the steel that honor stain'd 400
 In other hours, now widely drain'd

The life-blood from his bosom pouring,
That sent his soul—ah, whither soaring?
—To some drear realms of stranger air,
Whose passing gale sighs forth “beware!” — 405
It is a lesson man should learn,
That Nature’s law, however stern,
Is God’s creation, Heaven’s light,
Whose purity he should not blight.

They left him, o’er his body sprinkling 410
Some tears of seeming sorrow;
His Star of Fate was o’er him twinkling;
—It faded by the morrow!
It set, and then appear’d again,
Tho’ sadly chang’d — it had a stain 415
The memory trembles to retain!

It faded ; 'twere not well to say
How darkly beam'd its latest ray ;
Once more it faintly met the eye,
Then sunk into ETERNITY !

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NOTES.

N O T E S.

NOTE (a), page 14, line 173.

It is a strange but fatal truth.

The lines contained in this section are the effects of reflection, strongly assisted by the following beautiful sentiments :

“ C'est une chose bien singulière, que mon imagination ne se monte jamais plus agréablement que quand mon état est le moins agréable ; et qu'au contraire, elle est moins riante lorsque tout rit autour de moi. — Ma mauvaise tête ne peut s'assujettir aux choses. Elle ne sauroit embellir, elle veut créer. Les objets réels s'y peignent tout au plus tels qu'ils sont ; elle ne soit parer que les objets imaginaires. Si je veux peindre le printemps, il faut que je sois en hiver : si je veux décrire un beau paysage, il faut que je sois dans des murs ; et j'ai dit cent fois, que si jamais j'étois à la Bastille j'y ferois le tableau de la liberté.”

Roussseau.

NOTE (b), page 16, line 206.

In solitude reflection keeps.

An illustration of the effects of loneliness may be found in this quotation :

“ Michael Ducret, while he was confined in the castle of Aarburg, in the canton of Berne, measured the height of the Alps.”

Zimmerman.

END OF THE POEM.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

STANZAS TO EVENING.

I.

THE twilight beam in Heaven is setting,
Its dews the leaves are lightly wetting ;
Hung o'er the earth in silvery brightness,
Like a spread veil of purest whiteness!

II.

The stream in gentlest murmur gushes,
Soft as the quivering notes of thrushes ;
Trembles awhile, then seeks its pillow
Beneath the smooth fringe of the willow !

III.

Throughout the skies the stars arraying,
In silent lustre all are playing;
To watch the night, in beauty weeping
O'er mortal eyes in darkness sleeping!

IV.

Then, o'er the waters idly glancing,
You see the imag'd wanderers dancing;
In one continued blaze of motion,
Along the tranquil line of Ocean!

V.

'Tis peaceful all — yet, in its stillness,
The heart is wrapt in solemn chillness;
An awful spell, that, as it shineth,
Around the soul its magic twineth.

VI.

'Twill pass away ; and, with the morrow,
Comes former ill, and other sorrow ;
Thus, day and night in union blending,
'Tis pangs and madness never ending !

A MELODY.

“ *Movemur enim, nescio quo pacto, locis ipsis in quibus eorum quos diligimus aut admiramur, adsunt vestigia.*”

I.

THE days of youth have glided by, like wild enchantment's dream,
And early joys that fed its flame withdraw their lessening beam;
Care's heavy curse upon the breast hath fix'd a venom'd thong,
Which the cold worm of dark Despair in silence draws along!

II.

The thoughts of youth have wove their chain so
firmly round the heart,

That, oh! 'twere better e'en from life, than its fond
links, to part :

For life is but a blighted tree, or some sequester'd
plain,

But they — its lonely light of peace that will not
set again !

III.

Friends of my soul, beneath whose smile my morning
years were pass'd,

Like gleams of light, or music sounds, that gladden
while they last ;

Though vanish'd, there's an awful joy to view the
dear remains

Of faded forms, whose sad retreat the tear of memory
stains !

IV.

And thou, fair flower! that early shon'st across my
 thorny way,
To cheer the solitude of Hope where I was wont
 to stray ;
Or chase the past, the present soothe, a Star of
 Fate before ;
Sear'd is thy ray, thy bloom is shorn, pale, trembling
 and — no more !

V.

A hated world, false smiles and hearts have stain'd
 the goblet's brow,
Whose mantling tide, in other hours, their folly
 woo'd to flow :
Then, o'er the mind's distracted page as faithful me-
 mory sighs,
In peaceful, light, and happy dreams her former
 days arise !

VI.

Upon her timeless tablet fix'd, my heart would fain
delay,
To weep the tears which once *I* wept, but *others*
wip'd away :
My madden'd eye then upward turns to where,
enshrin'd above,
Those kindred smiles, recall'd from earth, in starry
stillness rove !

VII.

Oh, for the falcon's wing of flight to reach that
promis'd clime,
Where the mourner's tear, and captive's sigh forego
the call of Time :
Where heart to heart in union blends, like love's
responsive kiss,
And, guided by Eternity, floats thro' its boundless
bliss !

ZELMA'S LAMENT*.

1.

I WAFT along the balmy air
Which o'er my dungeon sweeps,
A sigh that breathes as fresh and fair,
Though inwardly it weeps !
I mingle with the storm that rides
Along the blacken'd sky,
A tear, as sadly dark, that glides
From Sorrow's swollen eye !

* These words were given to Mr. T. Welsh, by whom they were arranged to some exquisite music; and the whole composition sung with considerable effect by Miss Merry, in the revived opera of Ramah Droog, at Drury Lane Theatre.

2.

The murmur of the wanton breeze,
The trembling of the gale,
Are hush'd, and pillow'd on the trees
That wave in yonder vale !
My lid is dry, my breast is still,
They cannot wake again ;
My heart is bursting from the thrill
It beats, in silent pain !

Elegiac Stanzas.

Oh gloriosa in vero ombra felice,
Che giaci infra sì nobile corteggio,
Nella beata tua terra nutrice!

Alfieri.

I.

I WATCH'D thy peaceful spirit part
On wing of softest light ;
The chill blood settled on my heart,
Like dampness of the night !
It was a dreadful sight—
And yet so motionless it stole ;
With that divine delight,
Which breathes but in an angel's soul !

II.

When direst sickness on thee prest,
Not one complaint we heard ;
There was a calm upon thy breast,
Like solitude unstirr'd !
Perchance one voiceless word
Escap'd thy sainted lip in prayer ;
Yet even then it err'd,
Like sighs of Heaven's stillest air !

III.

It fled—and left me feelingless
Beside thy nameless trunk ;
My thoughts to deepest bitterness
Within their cloister shrunk !

A dimness on me sunk :
My senses wander'd from their track,
In very madness drunk ;
And then in lowest grief came back !

IV.

When sense return'd, I look'd afar
To realms of purest day ;
I saw thee melt into a Star
Of fair, unclouded ray !
Oh, then, how dear the sway
Reflection on my fancy kept !
E'en sorrow wiped away
'The tears in loneliness she wept !

V.

I doubting stood beside thy bed,
To see if thou wert gone!
I gaz'd—'twas palely dark, and dead —
And Echo was alone.
One deep intrusive groan
Arous'd her: 'twas from sadness hurl'd —
She sounded back the tone;
It ceas'd — I rush'd upon the world!

VI.

In secrecy, I sometimes look
On what is left of thee:
Mine own misfortunes I can brook,
From thine, bequeath'd to me!

While I in silence see
The blessings to thy virtues giv'n;
My sighs in stillness flee,
To join thee in the calm of Heav'n'

A S O N G.

1.

WHEN every joy this world can give
Is blighted in its beam ;
When every hope that bid us live,
Hath ceas'd to gild life's dream :

2.

When every form that charms the eyes,
Hath vanish'd from its view ;
And every heart that our hearts prize,
Is cold, and silent too !

3.

Then what were life? — A worthless boon,
'Twere happier to resign ;
A Sun — which lapp'd in clouds of noon,
May set, but will not shine !

4.

Welcome the icy clasp of death,
That freezes o'er the mourner's eye ;
And chills the pilgrim's faltering breath,
To light them both to peace on high !

THE CAPTIVE

TO THE SETTING SUN.

I.

YON Sun, that slowly dies away
Along the trembling wave,
Fades from the purer light of day,
To night's sequester'd grave :
While man, lone pilgrim of the hour,
A kindred spirit knows ;
And, like the tendril of the flower,
Blooms but as soon to close !

II.

Fair orb ! I watch thy seraph blaze,
 In anguish I adore ;
And mourn each tint that faintly plays,
 Which I may see no more :
Thy morrow's beam, which soon shall rise
 To gild the matin heath,
Will darken o'er an Exile's eyes,
 Or cloud my pall of death !

III.

Thou Sun of Sorrow, fare thee well !
 I dare not look again ;
The pangs which thus my bosom swell,
 Are torture's deepest stain !

For thou wilt rise, and thou wilt set,
And then my aching sight,
Which grief has now so rudely wet,
May join thy silent flight!

Farewell.

Addio, mia vita! Addio
Luce degli occhi miei!
Quando fedel mi sei,
Che più bramar dovrò!

Adriano in Syria, Act 2d.

I.

FAREWELL, Mary! lov'd the dearest
By a bosom, the sincerest
Ever bound to *thee*:
The happy days of life may flow,
But those fond souls who made them so,
Cannot pass from *me*!

II.

When sparkling pleasure mantled high,

And rapture lighted beauty's eye,

Bright it shone on *me* ;

And now, as fades the transient spell,

Reflected from my memory's cell

Pale it glows on *thee* !

III:

Fair Fate! within whose magic round

The pulses of my soul are bound,

While they beat for *thee* ;

Judge, while expression, lost in feeling,

Through every vein is wildly stealing ;

Judge, thyself, for *me* !

IV.

If friends should change, if foes prevail,
Or adverse frowns around thee rail,
 Cast a thought on *me*!
Turn then, and claim the wonted look
Which, thro' a false world's vain rebuke,
 Long will play round *thee*.

V.

Tho' hatred's sting on thee should fall,
The parted, lov'd, and dead recall *,
 And remember *me* :
So, when the storms by sorrow nurst,
On this devoted head shall burst,
 My heart will break for *thee*!

* Alluding to a melancholy fact.

STANZAS.

IN every change of busy life,
Through paths of pleasure — scenes of strife —
By rapture mov'd, or grief opprest,
To find *one* gentle, constant *breast* ;
When misery dims the silent eye,
Or passion steals the trembling sigh ;
When madness darkens round the heart,
And cannot rest, nor will depart :
By many scorn'd, by most forgot,
To meet *one smile* that changes not ;

When ev'ry beam that shone before
So calmly clear, now shines no more :
Thro' present ills, or tumults past,
To view *one* set not to the last ;
And, if reclaim'd from Earth above,
Along the path where all is love,
The same sweet *Spirit*, there, to know,
That watch'd our hapless hours below :
A *Spirit*, *smile*, and *breast*, like *this*,
Of purest light, of softest bliss ;
Engender'd here — enshrin'd in Heav'n —
The first and last to sorrow giv'n :
Bright, calm, and clear, and never less—
— The full delight of happiness !

TO A FLOWER,
ON CHARLOTTE'S BIRTH-DAY.

I.

FAIR flower, within whose sunny circle bound,
Unnumber'd beauties sparkle to the sight :
Rear'd on some Eden of congenial ground,
In splendour pure, in modesty so bright,
Wooing luxurious Nature with delight.
Though weeping winter should around thee steal,
And all thy lustre in its verdure blight ;
The lip of spring shall kiss away the feel,
And to thy bud again its wonted glow reveal !

II.

Emblem of her, upon whose cheek array'd,
The bloom of youth hath set its summer hue :
Revelling in brightness, by her smiles display'd,
The gazing eye beholds in long review
The charms of contemplation ever new :
And if the skies of Fate a frown should wear,
Or o'er her brow a gloomy garland strew ;
Time shall supplant the withering cincture there,
To twine another wreath, more constant and more fair !

STANZAS TO LIBERTY.

1.

THERE is a tie to being clings,

A chain of sacred grief ;

Which, tho' it drags in silence, brings

A sweet relief.

'Tis Freedom — the lone Captive's song,

The echo of his sigh ;

'Tis light, that clears the Patriot's distant way,

Where Fortune changes, or when friends betray ;

Which, as he weeps along,

Beams from his tearful eye !

2.

It is the dream that haunts his sleep,

Avenger of his care : —

It is the drop he wakes to weep,

Wrung from despair !

And, hark ! what warbling thrills the Sphere,

To tell him he is free :

Calm as an Angel's flight, soft as the hymn

Wafted in sighs from parting Cherubim :

It dies upon his ear —

— His native song of LIBERTY !

A SONG.

1.

WHEN o'er the dark grey sky
The twilight vapours weep,
When dews begin to fly
Along the swelling deep :
Though sad, though fearful all,
And pallid as the tomb ;
The morning's light will fall,
To dash away the gloom.

2.

When madness tears the breast,
Or feeling's aching lid,
By passion wrung from rest,
In deepest grief is hid :
This is a sacred pain,
That never can decay,
Until the heart's damp stain
In sorrow melts away !

A DUETT*.

HE.

OH fly, lovely girl, from the cold-hearted smile
Of those, who but strive to undo us ;
We will bask in the sunshine of some distant isle,
Where sorrow no more can pursue us !

SHE.

With thee I could seek out the sycamore shade,
Where the breeze of the twilight reposes ;
Or follow the range of the mountainous glade,
To watch the day-beam as it closes !

* These words are set to music by Mr. Charles Horn ; by whom, and Miss Merry, they were sung with much sweetness in the revived opera of *Ramah Droog*.

BOTH.

Then turn to this heart while it ventures to seek
In the tear of thy feeling a token,
A tie which may widen, but never can break,
'Till the link of existence be broken.

SHE.

In the smile of thy reason my feeling grew warm,
As it dazzled in splendour around me ;
The dark dreams of grief and despair to disarm,
Which in solitude ever surround me.

HE.

The Sun of my morning has hitherto rose,
In the light of its hope to caress thee ;
And the calm prayers of night, from their silent repose,
Have wafted to Heaven to bless thee !

BOTH.

When the Star of Futurity beams from above,
A warning by Providence given ;
We'll mingle together the tears of our love,
And glide on their course into Heaven!

TO MISS *****.

1.

THERE was a form, in earlier days,
That fled o'er my sight;
A soul my fancy hymn'd in praise,
With feeling's young delight!

2.

'TWAS passion, of the wildest wing,
'TWAS strife, as deep in pain :
It woke a more distracting spring
Than life can charm again.

3.

It pass'd away, but, in its flight,
Left worlds of thought behind ;
A wreck of hopes, a darkest night
Of sorrows, on my mind.

4.

It pass'd : perchance the heart's deceit,
Or woe, or death, was there :
No matter — I had fear'd to meet,
And learnt to brave, despair !

5.

Tho' hush'd, the ruins still remain
In furrows on my brow ;
The shades it caught and shelter'd *then*,
Are deep'ning o'er it *now* !

6.

And thus, when first thy smile I met,
I shudder'd at the sight;
There seem'd a charm within it set,
Of unforgotten light!

7.

Of other hours and hopes it spoke,
Of lost looks seem'd to tell;
Along my startled heart it broke,
A renovated spell!

8.

For days, for years, my breast was dark
Nor sense nor soul betray'd;
From introspection, each lone spark
Of passion felt decay'd.

9.

But now, there wakes a world of strife,
In triumph round my breast;
Again distraction's keenest knife
Cuts deeply to its rest!

10.

I pardon thee this fatal tear,
Once more from feeling wrung;
Thou couldst not know how oft and dear
For former peace it sprung!

11.

I see thee young, I see thee fair,
While o'er thy cheek is wrought
A softer, more expressive air,
Than first bloom'd in my thought.

12.

I feel it is a task too hard,
To weep o'er joys delay'd ;
I only ask thee to regard
The *ruin thou* hast made !

2d Jan. 1817.

CONCLUSION.

'Tis past —

— It was a vision smiling light,

That broke upon me in a lonely hour,

Dazzling my solitude away. 'Tis past —

Whether 'twas voiceless instinct, whether a ray,

Shed from some Angel-face upon my sight,

Or some warm tear, dropp'd by a viewless Seraph

On mine aching heart, to melt it into life;

Or other unseen power, I know not!

'Tis past —

— Fled like the summer evening's sigh,

Vanish'd like instant lightning o'er the Heavens,
And as unconscious breath from human lip !
'Twas lustre fading from the eye of fancy,
'Twas music, lost awhile to heart and song,
—— Dying in night ! ——

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THE END.

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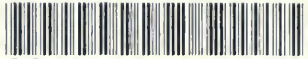
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